THE EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION IN WHICH AN EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OR PRIVILEGE IS CLAIMED ARE DEFINED AS FOLLOWS:

1. A cooperative advance warning system for use on a vehicle to warn drivers of oncoming vehicles of an upcoming, unexpected road hazard comprising:

a lamp mounted on the vehicle in a location where light emitted by the lamp is visible to drivers of the oncoming vehicles;

a switch means connected to the lamp for activating and deactivating the lamp, the switch means mounted to the vehicle in a location that is easily accessible to the driver of the vehicle; and

an electronic control means connected to the lamp for controlling the characteristics of the light emitted by the lamp.

2. A cooperative advance warning system according to claim 1, wherein the electronic control means comprises means to automatically deactivate the lamp after a pre-determined period of time following activation.

3. A cooperative advance warning system according to claim 2, wherein the electronic control means comprises means to cause the lamp to flash on and off at a pre-determined frequency.

4. A cooperative advance warning system according to claim 3, wherein the pre-determined frequency varies depending on the length of time the lamp has been activated.

5. A cooperative advance warning system according to claim 4, wherein the pre-determined frequency is inversely proportional to the length of time the lamp has been activated.

6. A cooperative advance warning system according to claims 3, 4 or 5, wherein the pre-determined frequency comprises a cadence.

7. A cooperative advance warning system according to claims 3, 4, 5 or 6, wherein the electronic control means further comprises means to maintain the pre-determined frequency or cadence at a particular value for an indefinite period.

8. A cooperative advance warning system according to claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7, further comprising an in-use indicator light connected to the switch means and to the electronic control means for indicating to the driver of the vehicle when the cooperative advance warning system is operating.

9. A cooperative advance warning system according to claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 or 8, wherein the colour of light emitted by the lamp is selected from the group of colours consisting of fuchsia and pink.

10. A portable cooperative advance warning system for use in warning drivers of oncoming vehicles of an upcoming, unexpected road hazard comprising:

a housing;

a lamp mounted to the housing;

a switch means mounted on the housing and connected to the lamp for activating and deactivating the lamp;

an electronic control means mounted to the housing and connected to the lamp for controlling the characteristics of the light emitted by the lamp; and

a power supply for providing power to the system.

11. A portable cooperative advance warning system according to claim 10, wherein the electronic control means comprises means to cause the lamp to flash on and off at a pre-determined frequency.

12. A portable cooperative advance warning system according to claim 11, wherein the pre-determined frequency can be varied depending on the distance from the road hazard.

13. A portable cooperative advance warning system according to claims 11 or 12, wherein the pre-determined frequency comprises a cadence.

14. A portable cooperative advance warning system according to claims 10, 11, 12 or 13, further comprising an in-use indicator light connected to the switch means and to the electronic control means for indicating when the cooperative advance warning system is operating.

15. A portable cooperative advance warning system according to claims 10, 11, 12, 13 or 14 wherein the colour of light emitted by the lamp is selected from the group of colours consisting of fuchsia and pink.

16. A cooperative advance warning system according to claim 1, further comprising:

a connection between the electronic control means and the vehicle brake lights; and

means contained within the electronic control means to flash the vehicle brake lights on and off at a high frequency upon activation of the advance warning system.

17. A cooperative advance warning system according to claim 1 or 16 further comprising:

a rear-facing warning light mounted on the rear of the vehicle;

a connection between the electronic control means and the rear-facing warning light; and

means contained within the electronic control means to flash the rear-facing warning light on and off at a high frequency upon activation of the advance warning system.

18. A cooperative advance warning system according to claim 16, wherein the vehicle brake lights remain flashing on and off only for a pre-determined period of time following activation of the advance warning system

19. A cooperative advance warning system according to claim 1 and 17, wherein the rear-facing warning light remains flashing on and off only for a pre-determined period of time following activation of the advance warning system

20. A cooperative advance warning system according to claim 1, further comprising:

a connection between the electronic control means and the vehicle brake lights; and

means contained within the electronic control means to flash the vehicle brake lights and the lamp on and off at a high frequency upon activation of the advance warning system,

wherein the switch has a first mode for activating and deactivating the lamp, and a second mode for activating and deactivating both the lamp and the brake lights.

21. A cooperative advance warning system according to claim 1 or 20 further comprising:

a rear-facing warning light mounted on the rear of the vehicle;

a connection between the electronic control means and the rear-facing warning light; and

means contained within the electronic control means to flash the rear-facing warning light on and off at a high frequency upon activation of the advance warning system.